

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A device for applying at least one product, the device comprising:
at least one receptacle configured to contain a product;
a removable unit defining a substantially enclosed space, the removable unit being configured to be removably positioned on the at least one receptacle;
at least one application element configured to be housed within the substantially enclosed space defined by the removable unit when the application element is not in use for applying product, the application element being further configured to be loaded with product from the receptacle when the removable unit is positioned on the receptacle,
wherein the application element comprises at least one surface configured to apply the loaded product, the at least one surface facing the receptacle when the removable unit is positioned on the receptacle during loading of the application element with the product.
2. The device of claim 1, wherein at least a portion of the at least one application element is porous.
3. The device of claim 1, wherein the at least one application element is configured to hold a reserve of product.
4. The device of claim 1, wherein the removable unit comprises a first portion and second portion that are removably engageable with one another.

5. The device of claim 4, wherein the first portion and second portion are removably engageable by screw fastening.

6. The device of claim 4, wherein the first portion and second portion are engageable in a substantially leakproof manner.

7. The device of claim 6, wherein at least one of the first portion and the second portion includes a sealing member.

8. The device of claim 7, wherein the sealing member is chosen from a sealing skirt and a sealing gasket configured to press in a substantially leakproof manner against at least the other of the first portion and the second portion.

9. The device of claim 4, wherein the at least one application element is secured to one of the first portion and the second portion.

10. The device of claim 9, wherein the portion to which the at least one application element is secured is configured as a handle member configured to be held during application of the product.

11. The device of claim 9, wherein the portion to which the at least one application element is secured defines an orifice configured to permit flow of product

therethrough for loading the at least one application element when the removable unit is positioned on the receptacle.

12. The device of claim 4, wherein the at least one application element is configured to be separated from the first and second portions during application of the product.

13. The device of claim 12, further comprising a handle member configured to be held during application of product via the at least one application element.

14. The device of claim 13, wherein the at least one application element comprises a portion forming the handle member.

15. The device of claim 14, wherein the portion forming a handle member is configured to be compressed when the first portion and the second portion are engaged with one another and to expand when the first portion and the second portion are removed from one another.

16. The device of claim 1, wherein the removable unit comprises an endpiece configured to cooperate with a portion of the receptacle.

17. The device of claim 16, wherein the endpiece is configured to cooperate with one of a valve, a pump, and a neck portion associated with the receptacle.

18. The device of claim 16, wherein the endpiece is configured to cooperate with one of a valve and a pump on the receptacle and wherein the removable unit is configured to move relative to the receptacle so as to actuate said one of the pump and the valve.

19. The device of claim 1, wherein the receptacle defines an orifice for flowing product into the removable unit when the removable unit is positioned on the receptacle, and wherein the device further comprises a sealing member configured to establish a substantially leakproof connection between the removable unit and the orifice.

20. The device of claim 1, wherein the removable unit further comprises a valve configured to open to permit an amount of product to flow from the receptacle into the removable unit while the removable unit is positioned on the receptacle.

21. The device of claim 20, wherein the valve is further configured to close at least when the removable unit is removed from the receptacle.

22. The device of claim 20, wherein the removable unit comprises a first portion and a second portion configured to be removably engaged with one another, and wherein the valve is one of overmolded and fixed by snap fastening on one of the first and second portions.

23. The device of claim 1, wherein the removable unit comprises a wall defining at least one orifice configured to flow product therethrough.

24. The device of claim 23, wherein the wall defines a bottom of the space containing the at least one application element when the removable unit is positioned on the receptacle.

25. The device of claim 23, further comprising a pad configured to be disposed between the at least one application element and the orifice when the removable unit is positioned on the receptacle.

26. The device of claim 25, wherein the pad is porous.

27. The device of claim 1, wherein the at least one application element is made of a non-compressible material.

28. The device of claim 27, wherein the application element is made of a sintered material.

29. The device of claim 27, wherein the application element is made of a material chosen from sintered polyethylene, PVC, EVA, polyamide, and brass.

30. The device of claim 1, wherein the at least one application element is made of a compressible material.

31. The device of claim 30, wherein the application element is made of an elastically deformable material.

32. The device of claim 30, wherein the application element is made of a material chosen from a foam of polyurethane, a foam of polyester, a foam of polyether, a foam of PVC, a foam of NBR, a felt, and a multilayer composite.

33. The device of claim 1, wherein at least part of the at least one application element is one of flocked, comprises a woven surface fabric, and comprises a non-woven surface fabric.

34. The device of claim 1, further comprising a housing associated with the receptacle, the housing being configured to receive at least part of the removable unit.

35. The device of claim 34, wherein the housing comprises a wall for guiding movement of the removable unit while it is placed in position on the receptacle.

36. The device of claim 1, further comprising one of a pump and a valve for dispensing product from the receptacle into the removable unit.

37. The device of claim 36, wherein the one of the pump and the valve is configured to be actuated by the removable unit.

38. The device of claim 1, wherein the receptacle defines an orifice configured to be in flow communication with the product in the receptacle.

39. The device of claim 38, further comprising a cock configured to substantially prevent flow communication through the orifice when the removable unit is removed from the receptacle.

40. The device of claim 1, wherein the receptacle comprises a housing for receiving the removable unit, the housing being provided with a lid configured to close the housing when the removable unit is removed from the receptacle.

41. The device of claim 40, wherein the lid is hingedly connected to the receptacle.

42. The device of claim 1, wherein the receptacle further comprises a dispensing member on a portion of the receptacle separate from a portion on which the removable unit is configured to be positioned, the dispensing member being configured to dispense product from the receptacle.

43. The device of claim 42, wherein the dispensing member is a pushbutton actuator.

44. The device of claim 42, wherein the dispensing mechanism is positioned on the same side of the receptacle as the removable unit.

45. The device of claim 44, wherein the dispensing mechanism and the removable unit are positioned on a top portion of the receptacle.

46. The device of claim 42, wherein the dispensing mechanism is positioned on a different side of the receptacle than the removable unit.

47. The device of claim 46, wherein the dispensing mechanism and the removable unit are positioned on substantially opposite sides of the receptacle.

48. The device of claim 46, wherein the dispensing mechanism and the removable unit are positioned substantially along a longitudinal axis of the receptacle.

49. The device of claim 42, wherein the dispensing mechanism is configured to dispense product from the receptacle independent from loading of the at least one application element with the product.

50. The device of claim 40, wherein the housing includes at least one relief portion for cooperating with the removable unit so as to substantially prevent rotation of the removable unit relative to the receptacle when the removable unit is positioned on the receptacle.

51. The device of claim 1, further comprising a dip tube configured to extend within the receptacle.

52. The device of claim 1, wherein the at least one application element occupies a portion of the space when the product is not loaded therein and is configured to expand within the space upon being loaded with product.

53. The device of claim 1, wherein the removable unit is configured to be placed in a closed position in which access to the space is substantially prevented and an open position in which access to the space is permitted.

54. The device of claim 53, wherein the at least one application element is configured to be compressed when the removable unit is in the closed position and to expand when the removable unit is in the open position.

55. The device of claim 54, wherein a portion of the application element forms a handle member upon expansion.

56. The device of claim 1, wherein the removable element further comprises a hinged lid portion, the at least one application element being attached to the hinged lid portion.

57. The device of claim 1, wherein the receptacle comprises a housing configured to independently receive the removable unit and a removable dispensing mechanism for dispensing product from the receptacle.

58. The device of claim 57, further comprising the dispensing mechanism.

59. The device of claim 58, wherein the dispensing mechanism comprises a push-button actuator.

60. A device for applying at least one product, the device comprising:
a removable unit defining a substantially enclosed space and being configured to be removably positioned on a receptacle containing a product; and

at least one application element configured to be received within the substantially enclosed space, the at least one application element being further configured to be loaded with product from the receptacle when the removable unit is positioned on the receptacle,

wherein the at least one application element comprises at least one surface configured to apply the loaded product, the at least one surface facing the receptacle when the removable unit is positioned on the receptacle during loading of the at least one application element with product.

61. A method of loading an application device, comprising:

providing a removable unit defining a space and at least one application element configured to be received within the space;

selecting at least one receptacle from a plurality of receptacles containing differing products;

positioning the removable unit on the at least one selected receptacle; and

flowing product from the at least one selected receptacle into the removable unit so as to load the at least one application element with at least the product from the at least one selected receptacle.

62. The method of claim 61, further comprising placing the at least one loaded application element in contact with a surface so as to apply the loaded product to the surface.

63. The method of claim 61, further comprising removing the removable unit from the selected receptacle after loading the at least one application element with the product.

64. The method of claim 63, further comprising carrying the removable unit away from the receptacle.

65. The method of claim 61, further comprising opening the removable unit so as to permit access to at least one surface of the application element configured for applying the loaded product.

66. The method of claim 61, wherein the selecting comprises selecting more than one receptacle from the plurality of receptacles containing differing products.

67. The method of claim 66, further comprising positioning the removable unit on each of the selected receptacles one at a time and flowing product from each of the selected receptacles into the removable unit.

68. The method of claim 67, further comprising placing the at least one application element into contact with a surface so as to apply the loaded product to the surface prior to positioning the removable unit on another of the selected receptacles and flowing the product from the other selected receptacle into the removable unit.

69. The method of claim 66, wherein the plurality of receptacles contain products having differing scents.

70. The method of claim 66, wherein at least one of the plurality of receptacles contains an active agent.

71. The method of claim 61, wherein the at least one application element comprises at least one surface configured to apply the loaded product, the at least one surface facing the receptacle when the removable unit is positioned on the receptacle during loading of the application element with product.

72. The method of claim 61, wherein the removable unit defines a substantially enclosed space.

73. The method of claim 61, wherein the removable element comprises a first portion configured to engage with a portion of the at least one selected receptacle and a second portion configured to cooperate with the first portion, and the at least one application element is secured to the second portion.

74. A method of loading an application device with product, the method comprising:

providing a removable unit defining a space and at least one application element configured to be received within the space;

providing at least a first receptacle containing a first product and a second receptacle containing a second product;

positioning the removable unit on the first receptacle;

flowing the first product from the first receptacle into the removable unit so as to load the at least one application element with the first product;

positioning the removable unit on the second receptacle;

flowing the second product from the second receptacle into the removable unit so as to load the at least one application element with the second product.

75. The method of claim 74, wherein the flowing of the second product into the removable unit includes flowing the second product into the removable element when the at least one application element is loaded with the first product.

76. The method of claim 75, wherein the first product is a perfume having a first scent and the second product is a perfume having a second scent differing from the first scent.

77. The method of claim 74, further comprising applying the first product loaded onto the application element prior to the positioning of the removable unit on the second receptacle.

78. The method of claim 74, wherein at least one application comprises at least one surface configured to apply the loaded product, the at least one surface facing the receptacle when the removable unit is positioned on the receptacle during loading of the application element with product.

79. The method of claim 74, wherein the removable unit defines a substantially enclosed space.

80. The method of claim 74, wherein the removable element comprises a first portion configured to engage with a portion of each of the first receptacle and the second receptacle and a second portion configured to cooperate with the first portion, and wherein the at least one application element is secured to the second portion.

81. An application system comprising:
the device of claim 60; and
at least two receptacles on which the removable unit is configured to be independently removably positioned.

82. The application system of claim 81, wherein the at least two receptacles are one of held by a common support and housed in a common box.

83. The application system of claim 81, wherein each of the at least two receptacles contains product differing from product contained in another of the at least two receptacles.

84. A method of loading an application device, comprising:
providing the device of claim 60;
selecting at least one receptacle from a plurality of receptacles containing differing products;
positioning the removable unit on the at least one selected receptacle; and

flowing product from the at least one selected receptacle into the removable unit so as to load the at least one application element with at least the product from the at least one selected receptacle.

85. The method of claim 84, further comprising placing the at least one loaded application element in contact with a surface so as to apply the loaded product to the surface.

86. The method of claim 84, further comprising removing the removable unit from the selected receptacle after loading the at least one application element with the product.

87. The method of claim 86, further comprising carrying the removable unit away from the receptacle.

88. The method of claim 84, further comprising opening the removable unit so as to permit access to at least one surface of the application element configured for applying the loaded product.

89. The method of claim 84, wherein the selecting comprises selecting more than one receptacle from the plurality of receptacles containing differing products.

90. The method of claim 88, further comprising positioning the removable unit on each of the selected receptacles one at a time and flowing product from each of the selected receptacles into the removable unit.

91. The method of claim 90, further comprising placing the at least one application element into contact with a surface so as to apply the loaded product to the surface prior to positioning the removable unit on another of the selected receptacles and flowing the product from the other selected receptacle into the removable unit.

92. The method of claim 89, wherein the plurality of receptacles contain products having differing scents.

93. A device for applying a product, the device comprising:
a removable unit defining a substantially enclosed space and being configured to be removably positioned on a receptacle containing a product, the removable unit comprising
a first portion configured to removably engage with a portion of the receptacle, and
a second portion configured to cooperate with the first portion so as to place the removable unit in one of a closed position so as to substantially restrict access to the space and an open position so as to permit access to the space; and
at least one application element configured to be received in the substantially enclosed space when the application element is not in use for applying product,

wherein the at least one application element is one of secured to the second portion and separated from the first portion and the second portion.

94. The device of claim 93, wherein the first portion and the second portion are configured to be separated from one another when the removable unit is in the open position.

95. The device of claim 93, wherein at least a portion of the at least one application element is porous.

96. The device of claim 93, wherein the at least one application element is configured to hold a reserve of product.

97. The device of claim 93, wherein the first portion and the second portion are removably engageable with one another via one of screw-fastening and snap-fastening.

98. The device of claim 93, wherein the first portion and the second portion are configured to cooperate with one another in a substantially leakproof manner when the removable unit is in the closed position.

99. The device of claim 98, wherein at least one of the first and second portions includes one of a sealing skirt and a sealing gasket configured to press in a substantially leakproof manner against at least the other of the first portion and the second portion.

100. The device of claim 93, wherein the application element is secured to the second portion.

101. The device of claim 100, wherein the second portion is configured as a handle member configured to be held during application of the product via the at least one application element.

102. The device of claim 100, wherein the second portion is hingedly connected to the first portion.

103. The device of claim 100, wherein the second portion is configured to be separated from the first portion.

104. The device of claim 100, wherein the first portion defines an orifice configured to permit flow of product for loading the at least one application element when the removable unit is positioned on the receptacle.

105. The device of claim 93, wherein the at least one application element is separated from the first and second portions.

106. The device of claim 105, further comprising a handle member configured to be held during application of product via the at least one application element.

107. The device of claim 105, wherein the at least one application element comprises a portion forming the handle member.

108. The device of claim 107, wherein the portion forming the handle member is configured to be compressed when the removable unit is in the closed position and to be uncompressed when the removable unit is in the open position.

109. The device of claim 93, wherein the removable unit comprises an endpiece configured to cooperate with a portion of the receptacle.

110. The device of claim 109, wherein the endpiece is configured to cooperate with one of a valve, a pump, and a neck portion associated with the receptacle.

111. The device of claim 109, wherein the endpiece is configured to cooperate with one of a valve and a pump associated with the receptacle, and wherein the removable unit is configured to move relative to the receptacle so as to actuate one of the pump and the valve.

112. The device of claim 93, wherein the receptacle defines an orifice for flowing product into the removable unit, and wherein the device further comprises a sealing member configured to establish a substantially leakproof connection between the removable unit and the orifice.

113. The device of claim 93, wherein the removable unit further comprises a valve configured to open to permit an amount of product to flow from the receptacle into the removable unit while the removable unit is positioned on the receptacle.

114. The device of claim 113, wherein the valve is further configured to close at least when the removable unit is removed from the receptacle.

115. The device of claim 113, wherein the valve is one of overmolded and fixed by snap fastening on the first portion of the removable unit.

116. The device of claim 93, wherein the first portion of the removable unit comprises a wall defining at least one orifice configured to flow product therethrough.

117. The device of claim 116, wherein the wall defines a bottom of the space when the removable unit is positioned on the receptacle.

118. The device of claim 117, further comprising a pad configured to be disposed between the at least one application element and the orifice when the removable unit is positioned on the receptacle.

119. The device of claim 118, wherein the pad is porous.

120. The device of claim 93, wherein the at least one application element is made of a non-compressible material.

121. The device of claim 120, wherein the application element is made of a sintered material.

122. The device of claim 120, wherein the application element is made of a material chosen from sintered polyethylene, PVC, EVA, polyamide, and brass.

123. The device of claim 93, wherein the at least one application element is made of a compressible material.

124. The device of claim 123, wherein the at least one application element is made of an elastically deformable material.

125. The device of claim 124, wherein the at least one application element is made of a material chosen from a foam of polyurethane, a foam of polyester, a foam of polyether, a foam of PVC, a foam of NBR, a felt, and a multilayer composite.

126. The device of claim 93, wherein at least part of the at least one application element is one of flocked, comprises a woven surface fabric, and comprises a non-woven surface fabric.

127. The device of claim 93, further comprising a housing associated with the receptacle, the housing being configured to receive at least part of the removable unit.

128. The device of claim 93, wherein removable unit is configured to be removably positioned on a receptacle having a dispensing member on a portion of the receptacle separate from a portion on which the removable unit is configured to be positioned.

129. The device of claim 93, wherein the at least one application element occupies a portion of the space when the product is not loaded therein and is configured to expand within the space upon being loaded with product.

130. An application system comprising:
the device of claim 93; and
at least one receptacle on which the removable unit is configured to be removably positioned, the at least one receptacle being configured to contain a product to be applied.

131. The system of claim 130, wherein the at least one receptacle comprises a plurality of receptacles configured to contain different products.

132. The system of claim 131, wherein the plurality of receptacles are one of held by a common support and housed in a common box.

133. The application system of claim 130, wherein each of the at least two receptacles contains product differing from product contained in another of the at least two receptacles.

134. A method of loading an application device, comprising:
providing the device of claim 93;
selecting at least one receptacle from a plurality of receptacles containing differing products;
positioning the removable unit on the at least one selected receptacle; and
flowing product from the at least one selected receptacle into the removable unit so as to load the at least one application element with at least the product from the at least one selected receptacle.

135. The method of claim 134, further comprising placing the at least one loaded application element in contact with a surface so as to apply the loaded product to the surface.

136. The method of claim 134, further comprising removing the removable unit from the selected receptacle after loading the at least one application element with the product.

137. The method of claim 136, further comprising carrying the removable unit away from the receptacle.

138. The method of claim 134, further comprising opening the removable unit so as to permit access to at least one surface of the application element configured for applying the loaded product.

139. The method of claim 134, wherein the selecting comprises selecting more than one receptacle from the plurality of receptacles containing differing products.

140. The method of claim 139, further comprising positioning the removable unit on each of the selected receptacles one at a time and flowing product from each of the selected receptacles into the removable unit.

141. The method of claim 140, further comprising placing the at least one application element into contact with a surface so as to apply the loaded product to the surface prior to positioning the removable unit on another of the selected receptacles and flowing the product from the other selected receptacle into the removable unit.

142. The method of claim 139, wherein the plurality of receptacles contain products having differing scents.

143. A device for applying a product, the device comprising:
a housing defining a space and being configured to be removably positioned on a receptacle containing a product to be applied;

at least one compressible element configured to be received in the space and to be loaded with product from the receptacle when the housing is positioned on the receptacle;

an actuator configured to move relative to the housing and to compress the compressible element within the space so as to release loaded product from the compressible element; and

a passage in flow communication with an exterior of the housing, the passage being configured to permit flow of product released from the compressible element.

144. The device of claim 143, wherein the actuator comprises a push-button.

145. The device of claim 143, wherein the actuator defines the passage.

146. The device of claim 143, wherein the housing comprises a transverse wall configured to engage with a portion of the receptacle.

147. The device of claim 146, wherein the transverse wall defines an orifice configured to flow the amount of product from the receptacle to the compressible element when the housing is positioned on the receptacle.

148. The device of claim 143, wherein the actuator is configured to slide within the housing.

149. The device of claim 148, wherein the actuator is configured to sealably slide within the housing.

150. The device of claim 143, further comprising an air passage permitting flow communication between the space and an exterior of the housing so as to permit residual air pressure to be released from the space.

151. The device of claim 147, further comprising a valve configured to close the orifice at least when the housing is removed from the receptacle.

152. The device of claim 143, wherein the compressible element is made of an elastically deformable open-celled foam.

153. A method of loading an application device, comprising:

providing the device of claim 143;

selecting at least one receptacle from a plurality of receptacles containing differing products;

positioning the housing on the at least one selected receptacle; and

flowing product from the at least one selected receptacle into the housing unit so as to load the at least one compressible element with at least the product from the at least one selected receptacle.

154. The method of claim 153, further comprising compressing the at least one loaded compressible element so as to flow the loaded product from the passage.

155. The method of claim 153, further comprising removing the housing from the selected receptacle after loading the at least one compressible element with the product.

156. The method of claim 155, further comprising carrying the housing away from the receptacle.

157. The method of claim 153, wherein the selecting comprises selecting more than one receptacle from the plurality of receptacles containing differing products.

158. The method of claim 157, further comprising positioning the housing on each of the selected receptacles one at a time and flowing product from each of the selected receptacles into the removable unit.

159. The method of claim 157, wherein the plurality of receptacles contain products having differing scents.